




NAMAN SHARMA
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India Marks a Relative Decline in Gender Parity, Ranks 131 Worldwide

Why in the News?

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, released recently, has ranked India at 131st position out of 148 countries, with an overall gender parity score of 64.1%.

- This marks a slight fall from its 2024 ranking of 129th out of 146 nations. Although India has made marginal improvements in certain domains like economic participation and educational attainment, its overall progress is slower compared to regional peers and the global average. Notably, Bangladesh has surged 75 positions to rank 24th, becoming the best performer in South Asia.

Background

The Global Gender Gap Index, first introduced by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2006, is a benchmarking tool that assesses gender-based disparities across four key dimensions:

- Economic Participation and Opportunity
- Educational Attainment
- Health and Survival
- Political Empowerment

The 2025 report, the 19th edition, covers 148 countries and provides insights into progress and regressions in closing the gender gap.

While the global gender gap has narrowed to 68.8%, at the current pace, full parity will take 123 more years. Iceland remains the top-ranked country for the 16th consecutive year, followed by Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

Southern Asia

Economy	Rank		Score
	Regional	Global	
Bangladesh	1	24	0.775
Bhutan	2	119	0.663
Nepal	3	125	0.648
Sri Lanka	4	130	0.645
India	5	131	0.644
Maldives	6	138	0.626
Pakistan	7	148	0.567

- In contrast, South Asian nations like Pakistan (148) and the Maldives (138) trail at the bottom.

Features of the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report (India-Specific)

Economic Participation and Opportunity

- India's score in this dimension improved by 0.9 percentage points to reach 40.7%, driven by a modest rise in estimated earned income parity (from 28.6% to 29.9%).
- However, the female labour force participation rate remains stagnant at 45.9%, indicating limited systemic change in job access or conditions for women.

Educational Attainment

- India achieved a high parity score of 97.1% in this area.
- Positive indicators include:
 - Improved female literacy rates
 - Higher female enrolment in tertiary education
- Despite these advances, gaps remain in the translation of educational gains into employment.

Health and Survival

- India has shown improved parity in this dimension.

Notable gains include:

- Better sex ratio at birth, suggesting a reduction in gender-biased prenatal practices.





- Higher healthy life expectancy scores, although overall life expectancy for both men and women has declined.

Political Empowerment

- This continues to be India's weakest area of performance.
- India has recorded a second consecutive year of decline in political representation.
 - Women's representation in Parliament dropped from 14.7% to 13.8%.
- Despite the 33% reservation for women in Parliament passed in 2023, implementation and enforcement remain a challenge.

South Asia Comparison

- Within the region, India ranks among the lowest, behind:
 - Bangladesh (24)
 - Nepal (125)
 - Bhutan (119)
 - Sri Lanka (130)
- Only Pakistan (148) and the Maldives (138) rank below India.
- Bangladesh's leap of 75 places was attributed to stronger political and economic participation by women.

Challenges

Despite India's structural and policy reforms, multiple entrenched barriers continue to hinder gender parity.

Labour Force Disparities

- Only about 25% of Indian women participate in the workforce, one of the lowest globally.
- Reasons include:
 - Unpaid care work burden
 - Social norms discourage female employment.
 - Limited formal job opportunities in rural and semi-urban areas.

Income and Economic Autonomy

- The gender wage gap remains high.
- Women's estimated earned income is still less than one-third that of men.
- Lack of financial literacy, asset ownership, and access to credit further impede economic autonomy.

Political Representation Deficit

- Despite the constitutional and legislative backing, women's participation in governance remains symbolic.
- There is a disconnect between legal provisions like the Women's Reservation Act and their actual implementation.
- Patriarchal party structures often sideline women candidates, using them as proxies or limiting their roles to token representation.

Education-Employment Disconnect

- Despite high female educational attainment, the education-to-work transition is weak.
- Cultural stigma, lack of transport and safety, and poor mentoring networks discourage post-education employment.

Persistent Health Disparities

- While the sex ratio at birth is improving, challenges such as:
 - Malnutrition
 - Maternal mortality
 - Access to reproductive healthcare continues to disproportionately affect women.

Intersectional Discrimination

- Marginalised groups -Dalit, Adivasi, minority, and rural women- face multiple layers of disadvantage.
- Gender inequality is compounded by caste, class, geography, and religion, making universal policy approaches less effective.





Way Forward

Strengthening Implementation of Legal Safeguards

- Fast-track the enforcement of the Women's Reservation Act, ensuring genuine representation at all governance levels.
- Ensure gender-sensitive budgeting and accountability mechanisms in government schemes.

Boosting Economic Participation

- Promote inclusive labour policies like:
- Flexible work hours
- Safe transportation

On-site childcare

Encourage female entrepreneurship through targeted schemes such as Mudra Yojana, Stand-Up India, and Skill India Mission.

Bridging the Wage Gap

- Establish transparent mechanisms for pay audits.
- Enforce the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, and update it to cover informal sector workers.

Reform in Education-Employment Pathways

- Create industry-academia partnerships to enhance women's employability.
- Encourage STEM education for girls and foster mentorship programs to reduce dropout from the workforce.

Political Mentoring and Party Reform

- Institutionalise gender quotas within political parties.
- Promote capacity building for women politicians to break stereotypes and build long-term leadership.

Grassroots Change through Gender Sensitisation

- Engage boys and men in gender equality campaigns.
- Leverage mass media and community leaders to shift deep-seated cultural norms.

Data Disaggregation and Policy Monitoring

- Improve the collection of gender-disaggregated data, especially in areas like unpaid labour and informal work.
- Use gender impact assessments for all major policy decisions.

Conclusion

India's position in the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report is a sobering reminder that gender parity remains a distant goal. While certain subindices like education and health reflect steady progress, economic and political empowerment remain major stumbling blocks. To bridge this gap, India must move beyond symbolic reforms to embrace transformational gender-sensitive policies that are well-funded, intersectional, and community-rooted. Only then can India truly harness the potential of half its population and make meaningful strides toward a just, inclusive society.

Main question

Despite constitutional guarantees and progressive policies, India continues to lag in achieving gender parity, particularly in economic and political domains." Critically analyse this statement in the context of the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report. Also, suggest policy measures to bridge the gender gap.

Q. About the Global Gender Gap Report 2025, consider the following statements:

1. India ranks higher than Sri Lanka and Bhutan in the overall gender parity index.





2. The Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex showed the highest improvement for India in 2025.
3. Despite constitutional provisions and a legislated 33% reservation, women's representation in India's Parliament declined in 2025.
4. Bangladesh's improved ranking is primarily attributed to increased female representation in the judiciary.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 4 only
- C. 2, 3 and 4 only
- D. 3 only

Answer: D. 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 Incorrect:** India ranks below Sri Lanka (130) and Bhutan (119); it ranks 131.
- **Statement 2 Incorrect:** Though India's score in Economic Participation improved marginally, it is still among the lowest performing subindices.
- **Statement 3 Correct:** Women's representation in Parliament declined from 14.7% to 13.8% in 2025, despite the Women's Reservation Act (2023).
- **Statement 4 Incorrect:** Bangladesh's improvement is due to political and economic participation, not judicial representation.





Retail inflation eases to six-year low of 2.8% in May

Why in the News?

India's retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), fell to a 75-month (6-year) low of 2.8% in May 2025, according to official data released recently.

- This marks the lowest level since February 2019, largely driven by a sustained decline in food inflation, particularly in vegetables, pulses, spices, and meat.

Background

- Retail inflation (CPI) is the primary measure used by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for inflation targeting under its monetary policy framework.
- The RBI's inflation target is 4%, with a tolerance band of +/-2%.
- Inflation was persistently above 6% for much of 2022 and early 2023, prompting the RBI to raise interest rates.
- Since late 2024, falling food and fuel prices, coupled with rate hikes and global moderation, have contributed to a downward inflation trajectory.

Feature Key Highlights of the May 2025 Inflation Data

- **Headline CPI Inflation:**
- Eased to 2.8% in May, down from 2.99% average in April.
- Lowest reading since February 2019.
- Food and Beverages Inflation:
- Fell to 1.5%, down from 2.1% in April - the seventh straight month of decline.

Contributing factors:

- Vegetables: -13.7%
- Pulses: -8.2%
- Spices: -2.8%
- Meat: -0.4%

Sticky Components:

- Edible oils: Continued double-digit inflation due to global prices, oilseed shortages, and import dependence.
- Paan, tobacco, intoxicants: Rose to 2.4%.
- Housing: Slight increase to 3.2%.
- Clothing & Footwear: Stable at 2.67%.

Monetary Policy Outlook:

- RBI has already implemented rate cuts in early 2025.
- Given easing inflation, economists expect a pause in further rate cuts, awaiting future data.

Challenges

Persistent Inflation in Edible Oils:

- Caused by low domestic production, rising international prices, and import dependency.
- Vulnerability to global supply chain disruptions and commodity price volatility.
- Uneven Moderation:
- While food prices are falling, core inflation components like housing and services remain stable or mildly elevated.
- Inflation in some essential non-food categories still affects household budgets.

Volatility Risks:

- Monsoon dependency poses a risk of agricultural price shocks.
- Geopolitical uncertainties (e.g., Red Sea disruptions, Ukraine war) may reignite imported inflation.





Policy Dilemma for RBI:

- Need to balance growth and inflation.
- Too much easing may revive inflation; too little may suppress economic recovery.
- RBI's policy is now data-dependent, complicating forward guidance.
- Way Forward

Supply-Side Reforms:

- Enhance domestic production of oilseeds through MSP support, crop diversification, and agri-tech innovations.
- Strengthen cold storage and logistics to reduce post-harvest losses in perishables.

Prudent Monetary Policy:

- Maintain a calibrated approach to interest rates, allowing for flexibility as data evolves.
- Strengthen inflation forecasting models and early warning systems.

Targeted Import Policy:

- Use tariff adjustments strategically to ease pressure on essentials like edible oil.
- Promote long-term trade agreements to stabilise global import costs.

Data Transparency & Monitoring:

- Improve real-time tracking of rural inflation, core inflation, and urban price dynamics.
- Ensure availability of disaggregated data for informed policymaking.

Consumer Protection:

- Encourage price monitoring systems in local markets.
- Support subsidies and safety nets for vulnerable groups during inflation spikes.

Conclusion

India's retail inflation dropping to a six-year low is a welcome development for both policymakers and consumers. However, the easing trend masks underlying risks in specific food categories, structural supply issues, and external vulnerabilities. A data-driven, supply-sensitive, and inclusive policy approach is vital to sustain disinflation and ensure macroeconomic stability without compromising growth.

Main question

Q. Retail inflation in India dropped to a six-year low of 2.8% in May 2025. Critically examine the key drivers behind this decline and analyse the implications for monetary policy, economic growth, and consumer welfare. Also, suggest measures to sustain low inflation without compromising growth.

Q. About the recent decline in retail inflation in India, consider the following statements:

1. The fall in May 2025 inflation was primarily due to a contraction in prices of edible oils, housing, and tobacco products.
2. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) in India is published by the Reserve Bank of India and includes both rural and urban price data.
3. The Reserve Bank of India targets CPI inflation under the monetary policy framework with a mandated tolerance band of $\pm 2\%$ around 4%.
4. Inflation in clothing and footwear, as well as paan, tobacco, and intoxicants, showed a significant decline in May 2025.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
B. 3 only
C. 2 and 4 only
D. 1, 3, and 4 only





Trump's tariff and an American-India trade deal

Why in the news?

Recently, the U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) issued a historic decision against the extensive customs measures taken by former US President Donald Trump.

- These tools, covering 10% to 135% and covering more than 100 countries, were considered legally invalid and violated international trade norms.
- The irony is that the most important legal challenge was not from sovereign states, but from five small and medium-sized American companies, which carried the errors in these customs.
- India-US on this legal and political development.

Background

Trump's tariff regime: an observation

- In a series of executive orders, the Trump administration has given the United States due to the trade deficit in the business deficit, unilaterally imposed a tariff on global import cites "national emergency".
- These actions were a clear departure from the rule-based global trading system, especially the World Trade Organisation (WTO) criteria, and emphasised the multilateral agreed customs plan.
- The executive action also enforced bizarre cases such as uninhabited Hurd and McDonald Islands, which highlights the profits.



Legal Challenge and Separation of Powers

- Five American companies working on goods such as alcohol, bicycles, music circuitst and fishing gear, the U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) challenges tariffs.
- CIT stated that the president's actions violated the principle of distinguishing the powers of the US Constitution.

Understanding Trade Deficits

- Trump justified his tariffs as a response to America's global trade deficit. However, the administration ignored the critical aspect of trade in services.
- For instance, while the U.S. claims a \$44.4 billion deficit with India in goods, the Global Trade Research Initiative estimated an overall trade surplus of \$35-40 billion in favour of the U.S. when services and arms exports are included.

FEATURE

The U.S. CIT Ruling and Its Aftermath

- The May 28 judgment was scathing in its critique of unchecked executive authority. However, the ruling has been stayed by a U.S. appellate court, rendering its immediate impact limited.
- The Trump administration continues to use these tariffs as a bargaining chip in ongoing trade negotiations.

Introduction of the OBBB Act

- The Trump camp has introduced the "One Big Beautiful Bill" (OBBB) - a legislative proposal that could potentially grant the executive immunity from





judicial scrutiny and even impose a 3.5% tax on overseas remittances.

- This could have serious implications for Indian workers in the U.S. and their families.

India's Position and Tariff Escalation

- India has been directly impacted by these policy shifts. Tariffs on Indian steel and aluminium exports have been hiked from 25% and 10% respectively to 50%, despite earlier WTO rulings that rejected the "national security" Justification.
- Although India withdrew its WTO case against the U.S. in 2023 as part of a mutual settlement, that agreement failed to prevent fresh tariff hikes.

Geopolitics and Trade: The China Factor

The Trump administration's apparent focus is on containing China. Initially, this was seen as a strategic opening for India, but two key developments have undermined that narrative:

- A U.S.-China truce has paused retaliatory tariffs.
- Threats to penalise Apple if it shifts manufacturing to India, suggesting that Trump's policies are purely transactional and not strategically aligned with India.

India-U.S. Trade Negotiations: The Sticking Points

Despite continuous talks, India and the U.S. have not finalised a trade agreement. Several contentious issues remain:

- Removal of additional tariffs.
- Avoidance of retaliatory measures against companies like Apple.
- Protection of digital services taxes and remittances.
- Securing H-1B visa commitments.

- Addressing cross-border data flows and services trade norms.

WAY FORWARD

Insist on WTO Compliance

- India must ensure that any trade agreement is WTO-compatible.
- While the U.S. increasingly disregards multilateralism, India must uphold it as a global standard bearer, especially after its G20 Presidency, which emphasised inclusive trade rules.

Negotiate from a Position of Strength

India must not rush into a sub-optimal deal. The temporary nature of Trump's tariffs, challenged internally within the U.S., should embolden India to hold out for a more balanced and fair agreement. Safeguard Indian Interests

A future deal must:

- Remove punitive tariffs on Indian exports.
- Protect digital services and data sovereignty.
- Exempt the Indian diaspora from remittance taxes.
- Secure guarantees on visa regimes.

Address the OBBB Threat

- India must firmly oppose any attempt by the U.S. to pass laws like OBBB that undermine judicial checks and international commitments.
- These pose a direct threat to legal predictability and contract enforcement in cross-border business.

Rebuild Multilateralism

- India must work with other countries to revive trust in the WTO. Joint action with allies affected by U.S. tariffs can help restore faith in rules-based trade.





Conclusion

Trump's tariffs and the subsequent legal backlash underscore a critical moment for global trade and democratic accountability. As India navigates its complex relationship with the U.S., it must prioritise long-term economic sovereignty, multilateral values, and strategic clarity over short-term trade gains. The U.S. may remain an essential partner, but India should never settle for a lopsided trade deal. Instead, it should insist on mutual respect, legal accountability, and fair economic engagement rooted in global norms.

Main Question

Critically examine the implications of Trump-era tariffs on U.S.-India trade relations in the light of recent judicial interventions. How should India approach the ongoing trade negotiations with the U.S. to safeguard its economic and strategic interests?

Consider the following statements regarding the U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) ruling :

1. It held that the invocation of "national emergency" cannot override international tariff commitments.
2. The judgment was fully implemented by the U.S. administration within 30 days.
3. The ruling questioned the constitutionality of excessive executive power in trade matters.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 1 and 3 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B

Statement 2 is incorrect; the judgment was stayed immediately by an appellate court.





The science behind the right AC temperature

WHY IN THE NEWS?

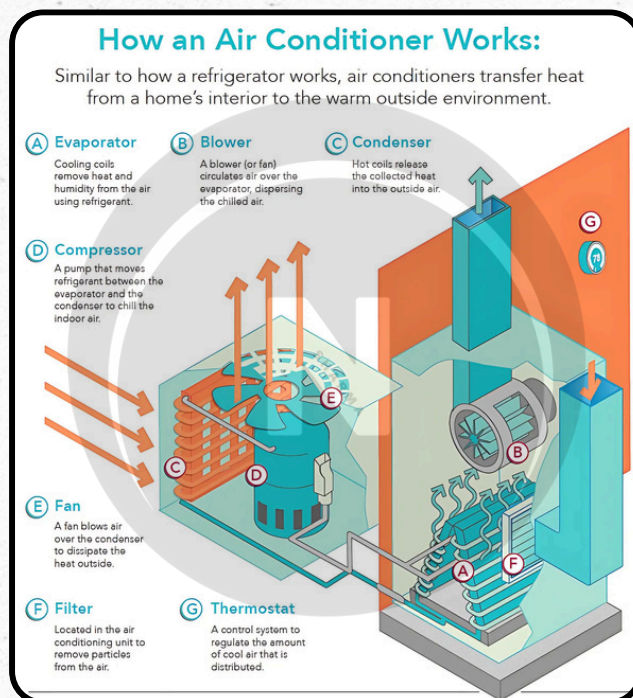
In June 2025, the Union Ministry of Power signalled its intent to regulate the operating temperature range of air conditioners (ACs) in India, restricting it between **20°C and 28°C**. The proposed mandate would apply to domestic, vehicular, and hospitality sector cooling units.

- This proposal echoes similar efforts made in 2018 and 2021, when the ministry advocated for 24°C as the default setting for ACs.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) had recommended this range as optimal for energy conservation, estimating savings of 20 billion units of electricity annually.
- But beyond economics, growing evidence suggests that setting ACs to excessively low temperatures may have serious health repercussions, ranging from hypertension to respiratory and mental health issues.
- As India sees a sharp spike in air conditioner usage due to rising temperatures, it is imperative to scientifically assess the right temperature for AC use, considering factors such as human physiology, thermal comfort, energy efficiency, and sustainability.

BACKGROUND

AC Usage Trends

- Globally, 2 billion ACs were in use by 2018, with the Asia-Pacific region leading the surge in demand.
- According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), residential AC usage tripled between 2000 and 2022,



reaching 1.5 billion units.

- Yet, 43% of people in the region still lack access to cooling, revealing a looming demand spike as incomes rise.
- In India, with the intensifying urban heat island effect, climate change, and growing middle-class aspirations, the market for ACs is booming. The BEE projected that the connected load due to air conditioners could reach 200 GW by 2030, up from under 100 GW today.

The Thermodynamics of ACs

Air conditioners operate on the vapour-compression cycle, using a refrigerant to absorb and release heat. The key components evaporator, compressor, condenser, and expansion valve, work together to cool indoor air by removing heat and humidity.

- The evaporator cools room air by letting the refrigerant absorb heat.
- The compressor raises the refrigerant's pressure and temperature (~90°C), consuming the most energy.





- The condenser releases the heat outside.
- The expansion valve drops the pressure, cooling the refrigerant for reuse.

Efficiency is highest when refrigerants operate near their optimal temperature ranges, typically between 24°C and 28°C. Cooling air to below 20°C, especially in hot climates, demands excessive compressor work, increasing electricity use by ~6% for every 1°C decrease in temperature.

FEATURES

Energy Efficiency and Savings

India's power grid is increasingly stressed during peak summer hours due to surging residential and commercial AC use.

Lowering indoor temperatures from 24°C to 18°C can nearly double the energy consumed by an AC.

- Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) and Indian Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (ISEER) ratings indicate how much cooling an AC provides per unit of energy.
- Higher default temperature settings enhance EER, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and minimise peak load stress.

Health and Wellbeing

Several global studies have proven that prolonged exposure to sub-18°C environments leads to vasoconstriction, which raises systolic blood pressure by 6-8 mm Hg, increasing hypertension risks.

Cardiovascular Impact

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) Housing and Health Guidelines (2018) prescribe 18°C as the minimum safe indoor temperature in temperate zones to prevent cardiovascular morbidity.
- A 2014 study showed that homes cooled below 18°C contributed to a 9% increase in population-attributable hypertension.

Respiratory and Immune Function

- Cool indoor air under 16°C increases mucosal dryness, fostering asthma, bronchitis, and infections.
- A 2013 study tracking 309 children across 12,000 child-days found lower peak expiratory flow rates in rooms below 16°C.

Mental Health

- A 2022 UK study showed a twofold rise in depression and anxiety in households chronically cooled below 18°C, even after adjusting for income and other socioeconomic variables.

Thermal Comfort Physiology

• Thermal comfort depends on:

- Core temperature maintenance (~37°C)
- Skin temperature balance (~33°C)
- Minimal sweating or shivering
- According to ASHRAE-55 and ISO 7730 standards, comfort is defined where no more than 10% of occupants feel thermal discomfort. For a person at rest, a range of 20–24°C suffices for radiative and convective heat loss without needing sweat evaporation.

Sleep and Vulnerable Populations

- Sleep quality improves when core temperature drops by 1°C, often facilitated by cool environments.
- Ideal sleep temperature: 16–19°C for young adults; 18–21°C for infants and the elderly with weaker thermoregulation.
- However, sustained overnight exposure to temperatures below 18°C may backfire, especially for the elderly and chronically ill, due to impaired circulation and immune responses.





CHALLENGES

Public Awareness and Behavioural Habits

- Many consumers perceive 18–20°C as a mark of 'better' cooling, linking it to luxury and comfort.
- Education about scientific comfort thresholds, energy savings, and health impacts remains limited.
- Even when users set default temperatures to 24°C, they often lower them later due to habit or misinformation.

Technological Constraints

- Legacy AC models may lack programmable thermostats or smart temperature control, reducing compliance.
- Low-end models often exclude inverter technology, which helps maintain temperature at optimal levels with lower energy draw.

Regulatory and Enforcement Limitations

- Past initiatives in 2018 and 2021 for setting 24°C as the default have not been adopted as mandates.
- **The success of a 20–28°C regulatory range depends on:**
 - Uniform standards across manufacturers
 - Clear labelling
 - Consumer-facing information drives

Economic Concerns

- Cooler AC settings increase electricity bills, particularly hurting middle and lower-income consumers unaware of efficiency practices.
- However, mandating ranges may lead to price hikes in new ACs due to added compliance or software changes.
- Regional and Climate Variations.

- India's diverse climate zones, from dry-hot Rajasthan to humid Chennai and temperate Shimla, require localised temperature guidance, not one-size-fits-all regulations.
- The ASHRAE comfort zone itself adjusts ambient comfort expectations based on local dress culture and humidity.

WAY FORWARD

Institutionalise Default Temperature Regulations

- Make 24°C the default factory setting in all ACs, as previously proposed.
- Label ACs with 'optimal temperature use' messages, like those seen in star-rating schemes by BEE.
- Mandate that programmable thermostats offer locked or recommended settings between 20°C and 28°C, with overrides only allowed after a delay or alert.

Launch a Nationwide Awareness Campaign

- Led by BEE, MoEFCC, and state energy regulators, the campaign should:
 - Promote the 6% energy saving per degree rule
 - Explain the health impacts of sub-18°C cooling
 - Provide 'Cool Comfort' guides based on local climates
- Include schools, RWAs, office spaces, and digital platforms in messaging campaigns.

Boost Access to Smart and Energy-Efficient ACs

- Provide financial incentives, GST cuts, or PLI-like subsidies for inverter-based and programmable ACs.





- Encourage innovation in dual-sensor systems (measuring both occupancy and ambient conditions) for dynamic cooling.
- Develop affordable smart thermostats for retrofitting existing ACs.

Urban Cooling Codes and Building Standards

- Integrate AC regulation into the National Building Code (NBC) and ECBC (Energy Conservation Building Code) norms.
- Mandate buildings to offer zonal cooling controls, especially in offices and malls, reducing energy wastage.
- Encourage passive cooling (ventilation, insulation, window shading) to reduce AC dependency.

Tailor Policies for Climate Zones

- Classify India into thermal comfort zones (hot-dry, warm-humid, composite, temperate, cold) and create custom temperature guidelines.
- Cities can form local cooling policies, much like Heat Action Plans (HAPs), aligning comfort with climate.

Encourage Research and Indigenous Innovation

- Fund CSIR labs, IITs, and private innovators to:
 - Improve refrigerant cycle efficiency at higher temperature set points
 - Design algorithms for predictive temperature control.
 - Develop affordable ACs for Tier-2 and 3 cities with built-in comfort regulation

Incorporate AC Cooling in Climate Goals

- Include residential cooling efficiency in India's updated NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) under the Paris Agreement.

- Encourage green cooling technologies, such as hydrocarbon refrigerants (R-290) and solar-powered AC units, as part of climate-smart urban planning.

Conclusion

India's pursuit of thermal comfort in the face of climate change must strike a careful balance between personal comfort, public health, and planetary sustainability. The science is now irrefutable: lowering AC temperatures below 18°C yields marginal comfort gains at the cost of higher electricity bills, emissions, and health risks. By institutionalising a rational operating range of 20°C to 28°C, supported by public awareness, smart technologies, and regulatory mandates, India can not only cool its homes more wisely but also cool the planet—one degree at a time.

MAIN QUESTION

Q.. "Discuss the scientific, environmental, and public health rationale behind regulating the default temperature settings in air conditioners. In this context, critically examine the recent proposal by the Union Ministry of Power to fix the AC temperature range between 20°C and 28°C."
(250 words)

Which of the following organisations recommends 18°C as the minimum safe indoor temperature in colder climates for health reasons?

- A) ASHRAE
- B) ISO
- C) WHO
- D) IPCC

Answer: C) WHO



Exercise KHAAN QUEST

Why in the News?

The Indian Army has deployed its contingent to participate in Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2025, a major multinational peacekeeping exercise being held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Concurrently, India is also set to conduct Exercise SHAKTI 2025 with France.

About Exercise KHAAN QUEST, 2025:

- **Overview:** Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2025 is a multinational peacekeeping military exercise being held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from June 14 to 28, 2025.
- **Origins:** The exercise was initiated in 2003 as a bilateral drill between the United States and Mongolian Armed Forces and became a multinational event in 2006.
- **Indian Participation:** India has sent a 40-member contingent, primarily from the Kumaon Regiment, along with personnel from other arms and services, including one woman officer and two women soldiers.

Focus: The exercise trains troops for About Exercise SHAKTI, 2025:

- **Overview:** It is a bilateral military drill between India and France, scheduled to take place at La Cavalerie, France, from June 18 to July 1, 2025.
- **Exercise Series:** This marks the 8th edition of the biennial joint exercise, reflecting a strong and ongoing defence partnership between the two nations.
- **Objectives:** The drill focuses on enhancing the joint capability to conduct multi-domain operations, especially in sub-conventional warfare scenarios.



- **Core Training Areas:** It includes sessions on tactical coordination, joint operational planning, and counter-terrorism techniques.
- **Goals:** To deepen military cooperation, foster mutual trust, and build interoperability and camaraderie between the Indian and French armed forces, which deals with action regarding threats to peace and acts of aggression.
- **Key Training Drills:** Participating forces will engage in checkpoint establishment, cordon and search operations, civilian evacuation from conflict zones, counter-IED tactics, and combat casualty care.
- **Objectives:** The main goal is to build interoperability, promote joint planning, and strengthen tactical coordination among different participating nations.

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- **Core Training Areas:** It includes sessions on tactical coordination, joint operational planning, and counter-terrorism techniques.
- **Goals:** To deepen military cooperation, foster mutual trust, and build interoperability and camaraderie between the Indian and French armed forces.

Conclusion:

Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2025, held in Mongolia, exemplifies India's growing role in multinational peacekeeping efforts and underscores its commitment to global security and military diplomacy. The participation of the Indian Army, especially with the inclusion of women officers, highlights the nation's evolving defence ethos centred on inclusivity, professionalism, and international cooperation. Simultaneously, Exercise SHAKTI 2025 with France reaffirms India's robust bilateral defence partnerships and its strategic focus on enhancing interoperability in sub-conventional warfare scenarios.

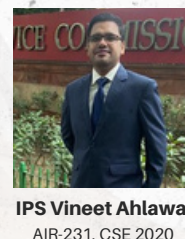
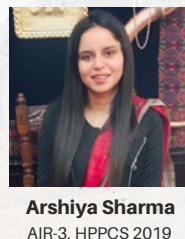
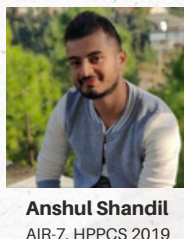
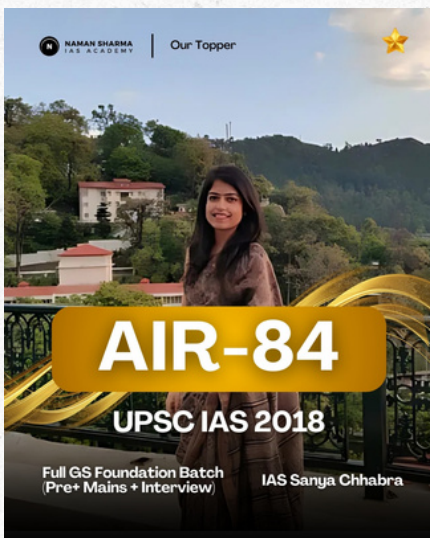
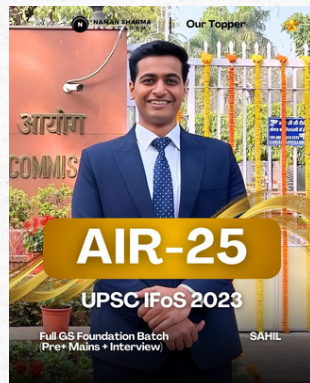
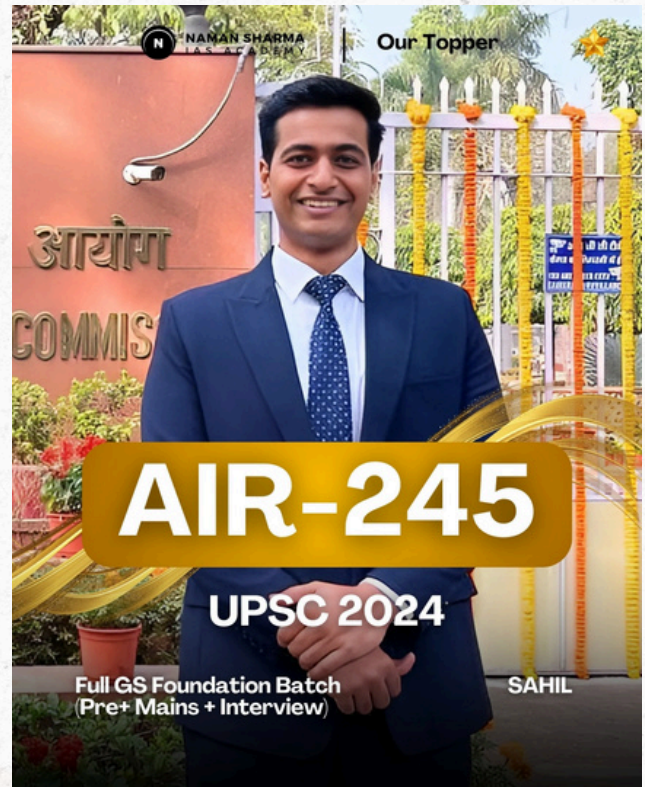
The Indian Army contingent participating in Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2025 primarily belongs to which regiment?

- A. Gorkha Regiment
- B. Kumaon Regiment
- C. Sikh Regiment
- D. Rajput Regiment

Answer: B. Kumaon Regiment



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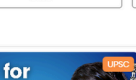
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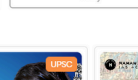
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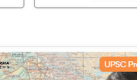
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


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